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15	NORTHERN DISTRIC	
16	SAN FRANCISCO-OA	AKLAND DIVISION
17	AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION	
18	FOUNDATION,	No
19	Plaintiff,	
20	V.	
21	DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE and FEDERAL	
22	BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION,	COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF FOR VIOLATION OF THE
23	Defendants.	FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
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INTRODUCTION

1. This is an action under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552, to enforce the public's right to information about the Defendant federal agencies' abilities to access encrypted information on electronic devices. Specifically, Plaintiff seeks records reflecting the governing policies and forensic capabilities of an FBI unit, the Electronic Device Analysis Unit ("EDAU").

- 2. The FBI and other law enforcement agencies have claimed that encryption technology is a significant hindrance in criminal investigations, making many devices inaccessible to law enforcement. In response to that claimed hindrance—which the government has dubbed the "going dark" problem—law enforcement officials have sought to legally require that encryption technologies be circumventable by law enforcement.
- 3. According to publicly available information, multiple units of Defendant FBI, including the EDAU, already have technical capabilities permitting them to decrypt, unlock, or otherwise access information on secured personal devices.
- 4. On June 26, 2018, Plaintiff American Civil Liberties Union Foundation (the "ACLU"), submitted a FOIA request ("Request") to Defendants seeking the release of records pertaining to the EDAU. (Exhibit 1). Plaintiff sought expedited processing and a waiver of fees.
- 5. To date, the Defendants have not released a single responsive record. Indeed, with respect to a number of Plaintiff's requests, Defendants have offered only "Glomar" responses, refusing to even confirm or deny whether responsive records exist at all.
- 6. Additional information about Defendants' ability to access encrypted information is necessary to better inform the public debate over law enforcement access to encrypted devices. The public interest in the records sought by Plaintiff's requests is clear. Because the government's forensic capabilities are a central aspect of the policy debate over law enforcement access to encrypted communications, the public needs to know about the governing policies and forensic capabilities of relevant FBI units, including the EDAU.

## **JURISDICTION**

7. This Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over this action and personal jurisdiction over the parties pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §§ 552(a)(4)(A)(vii), (4)(B), and (6)(E)(iii). The Court also has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 5 U.S.C. §§ 701–06.

## VENUE AND INTRADISTRICT ASSIGNMENT

- 8. Venue is proper in this district under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) because agency records are situated in this district.
- 9. Pursuant to Local Rules 3-2(c) and (d), assignment to the San Francisco or Oakland division is proper because a substantial portion of the events giving rise to this action occurred in this district and division.

## **PARTIES**

- 10. Plaintiff American Civil Liberties Union Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the principles of liberty and equality and to ensuring that the government complies with the Constitution and laws of the United States. It educates the public about civil liberties and employs lawyers who provide legal representation free of charge in cases involving civil liberties. It is also committed to transparency and accountability in government and seeks to ensure that the American public is informed about the conduct of its government in matters that affect civil liberties and human rights. Obtaining information about government activity, analyzing that information, and widely publishing and disseminating it to the press and the public (in both its raw and analyzed form) are critical and substantial components of its work.
- 11. Defendant Department of Justice ("DOJ") is a department of the Executive Branch of the United States government and is an agency within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1). The Office of the Attorney General ("AG") and the Office of the Inspector General ("OIG") are components of DOJ.
- 12. Defendant Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") is a component of DOJ and is an agency within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1). The Office of Information Policy ("OIP"), which handled the administrative appeals of the FBI Requests, is also a component of DOJ.

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 13. There is a vigorous public policy debate over whether the FBI and other law enforcement agencies need certain technological capabilities for investigations and prosecutions of criminal activity. High-ranking officials in those agencies have claimed for years that criminals are using strong encryption and other security measures to dangerously frustrate information gathering in criminal investigations. They have dubbed this the "going dark" problem. Charlie Savage, *Justice Dept. Revives Push to Mandate a Way to Unlock Phones*, N.Y. Times (Mar. 24, 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/24/us/politics/unlock-phones-encryption.html. Some government officials have pushed for a technical mechanism that would guarantee law enforcement access to encrypted communications—an "encryption backdoor."
- 14. The public needs more information about the FBI's capabilities to unlock, decrypt, or otherwise access information on personal devices to better inform the debate over encryption backdoors and the proper scope of law enforcement access to information stored on encrypted devices.
- 15. The public record indicates that the EDAU, a unit of the FBI, has these capabilities.
- 16. According to the agency, the EDAU is tasked with "perform[ing] forensic extractions and advanced data recovery on locked and damaged devices." FBI, *Supervisory Electronics Engineer, GS (FBI Employees Only) Job*, Lensa (Aug. 9, 2020), https://lensa.com/supervisory-electronics-engineer-gs-fbi-employees-only-jobs/lenexa/jd/6b56ed0fdf09bfd64ffb51238f80311c. Additional public information sheds some more light on the agency's tasks and mission. An order issued by the Honorable Jeffrey S. White, District Court Judge of the Northern District of California, concerning law enforcement access to a cellphone indicates that, as of February 5, 2018, the EDAU was capable of bypassing encryption and enabling access to the contents of a cellphone. Order Denying Def.'s Mot. to Suppress at 3–4, *United States v. Conerly*, No. 17-CR-00578 (N.D. Cal. May 30, 2018), ECF No. 43, *available at* https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4490173-Order-on-Motion-to-

1	Suppress.html (Exhibit 2). The order indicates that the FBI Special Agent investigating the case		
2	submitted a "Mobile Device Unlock Request" to the EDAU after the Regional Computer		
3	Forensics Laboratory in Menlo Park, California, was unable to bypass the password security		
4	feature on the phone. The EDAU is apparently capable of doing so, since it reported to the agent		
5	that if the phone was encrypted, it would "further slow," but not stop, "the retrieval process." <i>Id.</i>		
6	17. Other public sources also indicated that the EDAU has acquired and/or is in the		
7	process of acquiring technology that allows it to decrypt, unlock, or otherwise access information		
8	on secured personal devices. For example, the FBI issued a public call for bids to provide a		
9	"GreyKey GreyShift Forensic Workstation" for the EDAU. GreyKey Forensic Extraction		
10	Systems, GovTribe, https://govtribe.com/opportunity/federal-contract-opportunity/greykey-		
11	forensic-extraction-systems-djf181800pr0006154 (March 8, 2018, 11:49 AM); see also FBI,		
12	Request for Quotation, GovTribe (March 8, 2018), https://govtribe.com/file/government-		
13	file/djf181800pr0006154-djf-18-1800-pr-0006154-rfq-dot-pdf. GrayKey is a forensic software		
14	tool that acquires and searches data stored on Apple smartphones and tablets. FBI, Justification		
15	for Limited Competition/Simplified Acquisition 1 (2018), https://govtribe.com/file/government-		
16	file/djf181800pr0005744-greykey-justification-djf-18-1800-pr-0005744-redacted-dot-pdf		
17	("GreyKey [sic] provides native support to acquire, search, parse and present relevant data		
18	from iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, etc.)."). The FBI expects that the number of examiners that use		
19	the GrayKey GrayShift software will grow. Id. Finally, the bid mentions the FBI's interest in and		
20	acquisition of similar products. Since not all mobile devices are covered by each forensic		
21	analysis solution, "it takes several products, like GreyShift/GreyKey [sic], to ensure mission		
22	success"—i.e., that the agency can access information on mobile devices. Id. It appears that on		
23	April 19, 2018, the contract was awarded to GrayShift, LLC. FBI, GreyShift GreyKey Forensic		
24	Extraction Systems, GovTribe, https://govtribe.com/opportunity/federal-contract-		
25			
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27	<sup>1</sup> The FBI consistently refers to the company and program as "GreyKey GreyShift," but the		
28	proper spelling is "GrayKey GrayShift"		

1	opportunity/greyshift-greykey-forensic-extraction-systems-djf181800pr0005744 (March 18,
2	2018, 11:49 AM).
3	18. In addition to obtaining GrayKey GrayShift software, in March of 2017, the
4	EDAU sought a contract with Checkpoint Technologies for service on its InfraScan 300TD.
5	Checkpoint Technologies, L.L.C., GovTribe, https://govtribe.com/vendors/checkpoint-
6	technologies-llc-3c3k4 (last visited Dec. 18, 2020). Checkpoint Technologies was awarded the
7	contract for \$155,400. Purchase Order DJF171200P0000647, GovTribe,
8	https://govtribe.com/award/federal-contract-award/purchase-order-djf171200p0000647 (Dec. 4,
9	2020). While the Checkpoint website no longer mentions the InfraScan300TD, the website
10	describes its apparent successor, the InfraScan 400TDM. The InfraScan technology appears to
11	permit detailed microscopic views of electronics hardware in a way that could assist
12	investigators with determining secret encryption keys stored on hardware like the Apple iPhone.
13	Eric Limer, The Last-Ditch Method the FBI Could Use to Break Into That iPhone Without
14	Apple's Help, Popular Mechanics (Feb. 22, 2016),
15	https://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/gadgets/a19538/fbi-could-use-decapping-to-
16	access-san-bernardino-phone-data/.
17	19. In addition to these examples of the EDAU acquiring technology that enables the
18	FBI to access encrypted personal devices, a public FBI job posting explicitly states that the unit
19	extracts data from such locked devices. The posting is for an open position for a "Supervisory
20	Electronics Engineer" for the EDAU, posted August 9, 2020. The position requires a degree in
21	"professional engineering" (or adequate experience in engineering), and some of the major duties
22	of the role include: "Perform[ing] forensic extractions and advanced data recovery on locked and
23	damaged devices which are both commercially available as well as custom one-off electronic
24	devices"; "Work[ing] on the development and application of advanced engineering tools and
25	techniques to execute the mission of the Electronic Device Analysis Unit (EDAU);" and
26	"Coordinat[ing] and plan[ning] with EDAU's Senior Technical Director to ensure continuity of
27	EDAU technical functions." FBI, Supervisory Electronics Engineer, GS (FBI Employees Only)
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1	Job, Lensa (A	Aug. 9, 2020), https://lensa.com/supervisory-electronics-engineer-gs-fbi-employees-	
2	only-jobs/lenexa/jd/6b56ed0fdf09bfd64ffb51238f80311c.		
3		The ACLU's FOIA Request	
4	20.	On June 26, 2018, the ACLU submitted its FOIA Request to the AG's office,	
5	OIG, and the	FBI, seeking the release of five categories of records pertaining to the EDAU:	
6	(1)	Any records concerning policies applicable to the EDAU;	
7	(2)	Any records concerning the EDAU's technological capabilities to unlock, search,	
8		or otherwise access electronic devices, including user interface automation,	
9		debugging tools, reverse engineering tools, fault injection systems, decapping or	
10		semiconductor lapping systems, laser or electron microscopy or other imaging	
11		machinery, electrical or optical probes, and/or parallel computing or	
12		supercomputing clusters used for automated search such as key recovery or	
13		password cracking;	
14	(3)	Any records concerning the EDAU's requests for, purchases of, or uses of	
15		technology, systems, or services described using terms such as "Network	
16		Investigation Technique" or "NIT," "Computer Network Exploitation" or "CNE,"	
17		"Computer and Internet Protocol Address Verifier" or "CIPAV," "Internet	
18		Protocol Address Verifier" or "IPAV," "Remote Access Search and Surveillance"	
19		or "RASS," "Remote Computer Search," "Remote Access Search," "Remote	
20		Search," "Web Bug," "Sniffer," "Computer Tracer," "Internet Tracer," "Remote	
21		Computer Trace," "lawful access," or "forensic analysis";	
22	(4)	Any records concerning the EDAU's requests for, purchases of, or uses of	
23		equipment, software, services, and/or technology for conducting remote searches	
24		or bypassing encryption or other security measures, including but not limited to:	
25		Remote Control System a.k.a. RCS or Galileo (marketed by Hacking Team);	
26		Finfisher, FinFisher Relay, FinSpy, and FinFly (marketed by Lench IT Solutions);	
27		Pegasus (marketed by NSO Group), and various tools marketed by VUPEN	
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1	Security. See, e.g., The Surveillance Catalog: How Government Gets Their Tools,
2	Wall St. J., last updated Feb. 7, 2012, https://graphics.wsj.com/surveillance-
3	catalog/; and/or
4	(5) Any records concerning inspector general or other investigations of the EDAU.
5	21. The ACLU sought expedited processing of the Request on the basis that the
6	ACLU is primarily engaged in disseminating information, and the records are urgently needed to
7	inform the public about actual or alleged federal government activity. See 5 U.S.C.
8	§ 552(a)(6)(E)(v); 6 C.F.R. § 5.5(e) (2020); 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e) (2020); 22 C.F.R. § 171.11(f)
9	(2020).
10	22. The ACLU also sought a waiver of document search, review, and duplication fees
11	on the grounds that disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest because it is
12	"likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the
13	government" and is not in the ACLU's commercial interest. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); 6
14	C.F.R. § 5.11(k) (2020); 28 C.F.R. § 16.10(k) (2020); 22 C.F.R. § 171.16 (2020). The ACLU
15	further sought a fee waiver because it qualifies as a "representative of the news media" and the
16	records are not for commercial use. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II); 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(d)(1)
17	(2020); 28 C.F.R. § 16.10(b)(6) (2020); 22 C.F.R. § 171.14(b) (2020).
18	23. None of the Defendants have released any responsive records. Plaintiff requests
19	that this Court order the AG and OIG to conduct a comprehensive search and release all
20	responsive records; order that the FBI process and release records responsive to FBI Requests 1
21	and 4 (as described below); and overturn the administrative appeals decisions as to FBI Requests
22	2 and 3. Plaintiff does not challenge the FBI's handling of Request 5.
23	Office of the Attorney General
24	24. By letter dated July 5, 2018, the AG's office acknowledged receipt of the
25	Request. In the same letter, the AG's office denied the ACLU's request for expedited processing
26	and deferred a decision on the request for a fee waiver.
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FBI's action as to FBI Request 2.

By email dated August 22, 2019, the Office of Information Policy affirmed the

1	40.	By email dated September 18, 2019, the Office of Information Policy reversed the
2	FBI's action	as to FBI Request 4, remanding the request to the FBI for further processing.
3	Specifically,	the Office of Information Policy reversed "the FBI's refusal to confirm or deny the
4	existence of	records responsive to [the] request."
5	41.	By email dated November 21, 2019, the Office of Information Policy reversed the
6	FBI's action	as to FBI Request 1, remanding the request to the FBI for further processing.
7	Specifically,	the Office of Information Policy reversed "the FBI's determination that [the]
8	request was 1	not reasonably described."
9	42.	By letter dated July 1, 2020, the FBI acknowledged the remanded appeal of FBI
10	Request 4.	
11	43.	By letter dated July 1, 2020, the FBI acknowledged the remanded appeal of FBI
12	Request 1.	
13	44.	To date, the ACLU has received no further response to remanded appeals of FBI
14	Requests 1 as	nd 4.
15		CAUSES OF ACTION
16	45.	Defendants' failure to make a reasonable effort to search for records sought by the
17	Request viola	ates the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(3), and Defendants' corresponding regulations.
18	46.	Defendants' failure to timely respond to the Request violates the FOIA, 5 U.S.C.
19	§ 552(a)(6)(A	A), and Defendants' corresponding regulations.
20	47.	Defendants' failure to process the Request expeditiously and as soon as
21	practicable v	iolates FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E), and Defendants' corresponding regulations.
22	48.	Defendants' failure to make promptly available the records sought by the Request
23	violates the I	FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(3)(A), and Defendants' corresponding regulations.
24	49.	The failure of Defendants to grant Plaintiff's request for a limitation of fees
25	violates the I	FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii), and Defendants' corresponding regulations.
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1		I	PRAYER FOR RELIEF
2	WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court:		
3	1.	Order Defendants to	conduct a thorough search for all responsive records;
4	2.	Order Defendant DO	I to immediately process and release all records responsive
5	to the Reque	est directed to the AG's o	office and OIG;
6	3.	Order Defendant FBI	to immediately process and release all records responsive to
7	FBI Request	ts 1, 2, 3, and 4.	
8	4.	Enjoin Defendants fro	om charging Plaintiff search, review, or duplication fees for
9	the processing	ng of the Request and FE	BI Requests 1–5;
10	5.	Award Plaintiff its co	sts and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in this action; and
11	6.	Grant such other relie	of as the Court may deem just and proper.
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13			Respectfully submitted,
14	DATED: I	December 22, 2020	<u> s/ Jennifer Stisa Granick</u>
15			Arianna Demas ( <i>pro hac vice</i> application forthcoming)
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	COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF